

Information About Mumps Disease



What is mumps?

It is an infection caused by the mumps virus.

Who can get mumps?

Anyone who is not immune from either previous mumps infection or from vaccination can get mumps. Before the routine vaccination program was introduced in the United States, mumps was a common illness in infants, children and young adults. Because most people have now been vaccinated, mumps is a rare disease in the United States. Of those people who do get mumps, up to half have very mild, or no symptoms, and therefore do not know they were infected with mumps.

What are the symptoms of mumps?

The most common symptoms are fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite followed by onset of swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears-on one or both sides.

Complications are rare. However, mumps can cause:

- Hearing loss
- Aseptic meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord) in about 10% of cases
- Painful, swollen testicles in 20% to 30% of males who have reached puberty
- Painful, swollen breasts in about 30% of women who have reached puberty and in very few cases inflammation of the ovaries
- Spontaneous abortion particularly in early pregnancy (miscarriage)
- Deafness, usually permanent

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically appear 16-18 days after infection, but this period can range from 12-25 after infection.

How is mumps spread?

Mumps is spread by mucus or droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person, usually when a person coughs or sneezes. Surfaces of items (e.g. toys) can also spread the virus if someone who is sick touches them without washing their hands, and someone else then touches the same surface and then rubs their eyes, mouth, nose, etc.

How long is an infected person able to spread the disease?

Three days before the start of symptoms until 9 days after onset.

What is the treatment for mumps?

There is no specific treatment. If someone has symptoms they should see a doctor. Call the doctor in advance and make a plan to minimize exposure to others in the office.

How do I protect myself (my kids/my family)?

Mumps vaccine (usually Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)), is the best way to prevent mumps. Other things people can do to prevent mumps and other infections is to wash hands well and often with soap, and to teach children to wash their hands too. Eating utensils should not be shared, and surfaces that are frequently touched (toys, doorknobs, tables, counters, etc) should also be regularly cleaned with soap and water, or with cleaning wipes. **To contact Immunizations Clinic regarding the availability of vaccine please call 327-7450.**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – National Immunizations Program
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For more information contact your doctor or local health department.

Central District Health Department
www.cdhd.idaho.gov

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